



Aquidneck Island Reuse Planning Authority

Representing the municipalities of Newport, Middletown and Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 3, 2010

1 p.m.

LOCATION: Middletown Police Station Community Room

Attendees:

Art Weber, Chairman, *Town of Middletown*
Jan Eckhart, Secretary, *Town of Middletown*
Keith Humphreys, *Town of Portsmouth*
Dick Adams, *Town of Middletown*
David MacBain, *Town of Portsmouth*
Bob Gilstein, *Town of Portsmouth*
Paige Bronk, *City of Newport*
Ron Wolanski, *Town of Middletown*
Tina Dolen, *AIPC*
Ted Clement, *Aquidneck Land Trust*
John Riendeau, *Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation*
Jared Rhodes, *Statewide Planning*
Julie Oakley, *AIRPA*
Craig Seymour, *RKG Associates, Inc.*
Geoffrey Morrison-Logan, *VHB*
Ralph Basile, *BBP and Associates, LLC*

Art Weber, Chairman, convened the meeting at 1:07 pm

Key Outcomes:

Approved the minutes of the AIRPA meeting of October 5, 2010 (Keith Humphreys moved and Jan Eckhart seconded).

Voted unanimously to hire Garrity and Knisely, (J. Eckhart moved and David MacBain seconded), as the legal counsel for the planning process.

Agenda Items:

- I. Approved the minutes of the October 5, 2010 Meeting.
- II. Vote to Hire Legal Counsel
 - a. AIRPA voted unanimously to hire Garrity and Knisely as its legal counsel for the planning process. The firm brings a deep BRAC experience to the table, and is expected to be a highly professional partner.

III. Update on NOI Communication

- a. Julie Oakley updated the Board on the recent communications she has conducted and received in regard to the NOIs. J. Oakley emailed all who had contacted her with interest in the surplus property since the July 28th public workshop. These emails offered her assistance, if needed, in order to submit a NOI by the November 22nd deadline. The three municipalities will be submitting NOIs for their individual projects, all of which have been approved by town or city council. In addition, there will be one NOI from the Maritime Simulation Institute with sponsorship from the Department of Education. They will be submitting as a nonprofit. John Riendeau knows the applicant and they have both private and nonprofit entities.
- b. J. Oakley and Paige Bronk addressed comments regarding the inclusion of the chapel in the City of Newport's NOI for a public park. At the Newport Redevelopment Agency's meeting it was discussed and suggested that the chapel be included in the City's submission. The chapel is in bad condition but keeping the impervious service/building footprint in the CRMC zone could be beneficial. However, at this time the City Council has not approved that for inclusion. If needed the NOI can be edited throughout the planning process and the National Park Service, the federal sponsor, is flexible.

IV. New Business

- a. J. Oakley conducted a visioning exercise with the Board. The exercise was to determine the Board's goals and vision for the five surplus properties. Each parcel was presented in the same manner. The outcome of the exercise was to identify the preferred and undesired uses for each site as well as identifying which of the following four outcomes were preferred:
 - i. Long Term Job Creation
 - ii. Economic Development
 - iii. Returned to the City/Town Tax Roll
 - iv. Public Use
- b. The first property discussed was the Naval Hospital Complex. RKG and their team discussed the design constraints the current configuration of Building 1 would present to a developer. In addition to the architectural constraints, the historic district could add to these limitations for the building's productive reuse. It is also slightly removed from downtown Newport and access could be a challenge. However, the property is a waterfront parcel which is its greatest asset. They also discussed the tepid market there is today. P. Bronk discussed the vision for the parcel as documented in the North End Master Plan. The outcome of the visioning exercise was that the preferred uses for the Naval Hospital Complex were mixed use with residential and commercial, high-end hotel, restaurant, boating component, and/or world headquarters. The undesired uses were single family residential and standalone retail. The preferred outcome for the site was economic development with public use along the waterfront. RKG did also discuss that currently there is no market demand for a high-end hotel and any demand there is would be basically taken from other existing hotels. J. Eckhart suggested contacting the Vanderbilt Hotel as a reference point for a high-end boutique hotel. Lastly, the Board and other participants discussed the pros and cons to having a public park along the waterfront and if that would hurt the potential redevelopment of the remainder of the parcel.
- c. The second property discussed was the Navy Lodge parcel. This parcel is part of a large study the Town of Middletown is currently funding. Their study includes approximately 15 acres from the Navy Lodge property to the John F. Kennedy School. Ron Wolanski

said that after some initial discussions, the ball fields and the library can be relocated. All agreed that West Main Road would benefit from streetscaping and traffic calming measures to soften what is thought to be a hard and harsh environment. The outcome of the visioning exercise was that the preferred uses for the Navy Lodge were a pedestrian friendly town center with mixed use and/or municipal/community uses. The undesired uses were auto-centric standalone establishments. The preferred outcome for the site was to return to the town's tax role.

- d. The third and fourth property discussed was the Burma Road and Stringham Road. These roadways would remain in use and would preferably be transferred to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT). However, RIDOT does have some concerns which are currently being worked on by AIPC and its partners. The outcomes of the AIPC's transportation study will be included in the reuse plan. Therefore the preferred outcome for the roadways would be public use.
- e. The fifth property discussed was Midway Pier/Green Lane. Unanimously the Board agreed the approximately 15 acres of land should be for recreation/open space as envisioned in the West Side Master Plan. Therefore the preferred outcome for the parcel was public use.
- f. The sixth and seventh parcels were discussed together, Tank Farm 1 and Tank Farm 2. The Town of Portsmouth originally had developed a vision that included all four tank farms. However since Tank Farm 3 and Tank Farm 4 were not surplus, their vision for Tank Farm 1 and Tank Farm 2 could be altered to include elements originally part of the redevelopment of Tank Farm 3 and 4. The Town of Portsmouth would like the future use to create jobs and increase the tax base of the town. The outcome of the visioning exercise was that the preferred uses for Tank Farm 1 and Tank Farm 2 were world headquarters, marine industry and/or service, military research and development, corporate business park, utility infrastructure, and extension of the open space network present to the north and east. The undesired uses were residential. The preferred outcome for the site was economic development with public use connecting the open space currently to the north, east, and west. A discussion also took place in regard to the available utilities in this area. The lack of availability or capacity could pose to be a limitation in determining the viable reuse options.
- g. Since this meeting was held the day after the elections, it was discussed that Art Weber and Naomi Neville were elected to their respective councils. Discussions also took place in regard to educating the new members on all councils as they will be an important part of the planning process.

V. Next Regularly Scheduled Board Meeting

- a. The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be held on December 7, 2010. At this meeting the Board will review all the NOIs submitted for their consideration. The location will be the Middletown Police Station Community Room and the meeting time is 1pm.

Chairman Art Weber adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Dolen, Executive Director
Aquidneck Island Planning Commission